

Lampson Brook Farm (LBF) Board of Directors
Minutes: September 13, 2022

Board Attendance: David Haines, Jonathan Spiegel, Tammy Ryan, Gerard Kennedy, Bob O'Connor

The Board introduced themselves and approved the May 3, 2022 minutes.

Some recent activities regarding the farm were summarized. EEA worked with MassDevelopment to see if the clean-up of collapsed and unsalvageable buildings at the farm could be worked out with EEA funding. While this was a good cooperative effort, the project could not be started yet, but it may be possible in the future if funding is there. The vote on the Management Plan should be delayed while we wait for additional comments from the NESFI, given that they now have a new Executive Director.

Craig Miner of Weston and Sampson (W&S) summarized the four reports produced on the structures of the farm (one on debris removal; one on basic repairs; one on hazardous materials ("Chapter 21E") and one on subsurface soil and water. There are about 8-9 buildings in good condition which can be repaired without disturbing asbestos. The Manure Shed has asbestos shingles which should be removed at the next opportunity. W&S examined the Compost area at the request of DCAMM. There are 9 piles that contain mostly compost material. The trash that is mixed in with some of the compost should be screened and disposed of properly if the compost area is to be used but does not need to be addressed immediately if the compost area is not used as is now the case. The Chapter 21E assessment examined past records and site conditions and found two Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC): the vehicle/farm equipment repair shop – due to the activities occurring there and the unmarked drum behind the dairy complex. The result of site sampling at these two sites found no reportable conditions and nothing down gradient of the repair shop. No subsurface issues were found. There is one floor drain in one of the Community Farm barns, but this is not a worry. A Board member asked the implications of these findings on future owners who may acquire the land and structures in an "as is" condition. Craig responded that the Calf Hospital has asbestos pipe insulation and should be cleaned up before any active or public use. This recommendation also applies to other buildings that are damaged that have asbestos present. A question was asked about the six tile silos. Craig said the W&S structures team felt three could be repaired and three cannot be saved and that they estimated about \$100,000 to repair the three silos. Overall, the reports estimated a cost of \$640,000 plus a contingency for a total of \$876,000 to repair the salvageable buildings and a cost of between \$910,000 and \$1,200,000 to demolish and remove the unsalvageable structures. Craig noted that these costs are for doing all the work at one time and that costs may be higher if it is done in a piecemeal fashion.

Pete Westover of Conservation Works gave an update on the Management Plan. Overall, the plan has received many public comments. NESFI recent comments focused on: the Farm Manager role, farm oversight and the relationship between parcel owners; the potential for a Memorandum of Understanding between the future owners; farm housing (a need to clarify

that it is on non-farmable land); roads and accessways; the need for insurance, adding a section on water courses and ponds; the survey layout of the Enterprise Zone #2 and the Hay Barn; and the need for a neutral tone in the plan. Pete discussed the need to strike a balance between protecting the farm resources in the conservation restrictions and other restrictions and the need to leave some leeway for the new owners in how they manage the land. Pete is waiting for more specific comments from NESFI and then will circulate a revised draft to the Board for additional comments. A public member proposed that the Plan state that there would be no housing on farmable land and focus any housing on the Enterprise Zone or possibly adjacent to the Jepson House. Another public comment asked whether the restrictions would be conservation restrictions or agricultural preservation restrictions (APR's). It was noted that the restriction language is on page 35 of the plan. Another comment said that the Plan should acknowledge the use by the current farmers including the community gardens and 4H use. A board member wanted the Plan to be more specific on how the various parcels of the Farm would be managed. Conservation Works staff noted that the management flexibility depends on the protection enforcement mechanism.

A board member asked if the Belchertown agricultural bylaw would be taken up for a vote again. It was hoped it could be. The concern with the past wording is that the list of "by right" activities could be allowed on farmland such as the Community Farm and this was not the intent of the drafters. However, if the zone becomes divided into just the two unconnected parcels of the Enterprise Zone, it might be considered "spot zoning". There was a discussion of whether the conservation restriction would supersede the zoning and the Conservation Works staff said this is the case. The use of the zone for housing was an issue with the bylaw's lack of passage and this needs to be addressed in any amendments. It was hoped that the bylaw could be put on the agenda at the next Town Meeting.

A public comment stated that members of the Board should work with the Legislature to add an amendment to the current law for the Farm to be rematriated to the Nipmuc Tribe.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:30. The next meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2022 at 6:00-8:00.